

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 003

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

UNCLAS BANGKOK 5646

USIA PASS IEA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, MILI, TH

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE: U.S. MILITARY
REDUCTIONS

1. PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOJ COMMENTED TO NEWSMEN MARCH 10
ABOUT U.S. MILITARY REDUCTIONS IN THAILAND AND ABOUT SEVEN VIET-
NAMESE WHO ESCAPED TO THAILAND THIS WEEK BY HELICOPTER.

2. FOLLOWING ARE UNOFFICIAL USIS TRANSLATIONS OF EXCERPTS FROM
THE PRESS CONFERENCE.

3. BEGIN EXCERPTS

KHUKRIT: (INAUDIBLE)....THOSE RADAR PROJECTS.

REPORTER: DOES THAT MEAN WE WILL SEND OUR OWN OFFICIALS TO
OPERATE THEM?

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KHUKRIT: YES. IT WILL TURN

THEM OVER TO US, BUT IT WILL TAKE
SOME TIME BECAUSE OUR OFFICIALS WILL HAVE TO STUDY AND BE TRAINED
IN AMERICAN TECHNIQUES. IF IT DOES NOT AGREE, IT WILL HAVE TO
WITHDRAW THEM#

REPORTER: (INAUDIBLE)

KHUKRIT: IF NO ANSWER IS RECEIVED BY MARCH 20, THE TIME LIMIT
WILL HAVE BEEN REACHED, AND THEY WILL HAVE TO BE COMPLETELY
PULLED OUT.

REPORTER: DOES THAT INCLUDE THE 5,449 MEN REMAINING?

KHUKRIT: ADVISERS DO NOT TOTAL AS MANY AS 5,000 MEN.

REPORTER: BUT THEY ARE NOT ADVISERS.

KHUKRIT: OH, TROOPS MUST BE COMPLETELY PULLED OUT. THERE IS NO
QUESTION REGARDING THAT.

REPORTER: IT SAYS THAT THEY ARE NOT COMBAT FORCES, THAT THEY ARE
RADAR UNITS IN RAMASUN.

KHUKRIT: NO, THEY ARE AMONG THE 4,000 MEN WHO WILL REMAIN AS
ADVISERS. ALL COMBAT TROOPS CARRYING WEAPONS MUST BE PULLED
OUT.

REPORTER: HOW MANY MEN WILL BE LEFT FOR CERTAIN?

KHUKRIT: THAT IS THE PROBLEM FACED ON WHICH NEGOTIATIONS ARE
BEING HELD. IT DEPENDS ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH OUR PROPOSAL IS
ACCEPTED. IF IT AGREES FOR THEM TO BE UNDER THAI LAW, SEVERAL
OF THEM CAN REMAIN, BUT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT SHOULD ANY
SPECIAL RIGHTS BE ASKED FOR.

REPORTER: WILL THEY RETURN HERE IN THE FORM OF CIVILIANS?

KHUKRIT: THEY WILL NOT RETURN. WHAT STRANGER AND STRANGER
QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED ALL THE TIME* HOW CAN THEY RETURN?
IF THEY RETURN, THEY MUST CARRY GUNS AND BE TROOPS.
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REPORTER: SUSPICIONS ARE FELT THAT RAMASUN CAMP AND KO KHA
WILL BE USED AS SITES TO KEEP WATCH OVER CHINA VIA INDOCHINA.

KHUKRIT: I KNOW NOTHING AT ALL. I CANNOT ANSWER ANY QUESTION
WHILE NEGOTIATIONS ARE BEING HELD. OTHERWISE, THEY WOULD
ADVERSELY AFFECT RESULTS OBTAINED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS.
EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE VERY CONFUSED. BUT THE GOVERNMENT MUST

EXERT ITSELF TO THE UTMOST OF ITS ABILITY. IN OTHER WORDS, AMERICAN TROOPS MUST BE PULLED OUT. EVERYTHING MUST BE TURNED OVER TO THE GOVERNMENT.

REPORTER: THE VOCATIONAL STUDENTS CENTER DISTRIBUTED LEAFLETS TODAY, AND THEY SAID FOR NOBODY TO GO TO RAJDAMNERN AVENUE ON MARCH 20, THAT IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS.

KHUKRIT: I DON'T KNOW WHAT DANGER THERE WILL BE, OR FROM WHERE. I MUST ORDER THE POLICE TO PREVENT ANY DANGER OCCURRING THERE.

REPORTER: IF NO ANSWER IS RECEIVED FROM AMERICA BY MARCH 20, WILL WE MAKE THEM PULL OUT WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD, AND HOW SLOW, HOW MANY DAYS WILL THAT BE?

KHUKRIT: DO NOT ASK FOR ANY DETAILS WHILE NEGOTIATIONS ARE STILL BEING HELD. WE MUST WAIT UNTIL THE DEADLINE FIXED IS NEARLY REACHED, AND IF YOU WANT TO KNOW DETAILS YOU MUST GO AND ASK THE FOREIGN MINISTER. I AM NOT THE PERSON TAKING PART IN NEGOTIATIONS. I HAVE ONLY THE PRINCIPLES WHICH WERE IN THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT ISSUED YESTERDAY.

REPORTER: WHAT WILL THE GOVERNMENT DO REGARDING THE SEVEN VIETNAMESE WHO FLED AND CAME HERE THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, AS WELL AS REGARDING THE HELICOPTER THEY FLED IN?

KHUKRIT: THEY HAVE BEEN PUT IN A REFUGEE CAMP. THE PLANE THEY FLED IN HAS BEEN SEIZED AND WILL BE RETURNED TO VIETNAM.

REPORTER: THE GOVERNMENT SAID IN THE PAST THAT IT WOULD SEND REFUGEES BACK TO WHERE THEY CAME FROM, THAT THEY WOULD BE PRODUCED IN A COURT OF LAW, THEN SENT BACK, THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE SENT TO REFUGEE CAMPS AGAIN IN THE FUTURE. A STATEMENT WAS UNCLASSIFIED

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ISSUED STATING THAT IT'S AGAINST THE LAW.

KHUKRIT: WHAT CAN BE DONE? YOU HAVE BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAW THAN I.

REPORTER: IF THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE SENT BACK TO THEIR HOMELAND, AND SHOULD THEY BE MAKING CONTACT WITH A FOREIGN COUNTRY TO GO TO, WILL THEY BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN HERE? IT IS REPORTED THAT THEY HAVE SAID THAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO RETURN TO VIETNAM UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

KHUKRIT: SUPPOSE I SHOULD WANT TO GO TO AMERICA, BUT SHOULD IT NOT ALLOW ME TO ENTER THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO LIVE THERE PERMANENTLY, I WOULD BE SENT BACK TO THAILAND. TENS OF THOUSANDS OF THAIS IN LOS ANGELES ARE SAID TO BE FACED WITH A SIMILAR PROBLEM.

THEY HAVE TO GO INTO HIDING AND ARE ON THE RUN TO KEEP OUT OF
THE HANDS OF AMERICAN IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES. (LAUGHTER)

REPORTER: WHAT ABOUT THE WARNING OF VOCATIONAL STUDENTS FOR THE
PEOPLE NOT TO GO TO RAJDAMNERN?

KHUKRIT: I MUST HAVE THAT REPORT INVESTIGATED FIRST BECAUSE I
HAVE ONLY JUST HEARD OF IT. I MUST HAVE IT INVESTIGATED AND
OBTAIN INFORMATION ON THE REPORT FIRST. END EXCERPTS
WHITEHOUSE

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